Without the slightest reference to any action had, or likely to occur ~~d~~ in the Mint at Philad^{a} or elsewhere, I desire to submit to the Director of the Mint a general question, that has often suggested itself to me since the passage of the Mint Act of 1873, and more urgently now than heretofore, in view of my responsibility for the $50,000,000.= (more or less) of Gold and Silver that annually passes through my hands. The amount of responsibility is measured by the value of the bullion, The degree (nature and) of that responsibility can only be estimated by considering, that nearly every working day in the year, I distribute into the hands of some 40 workmen, $100,000, or $200,000 (of over $500,000.= in Gold), to be melted in detail in a number of furnaces, or to be refined by solution in acids, - and that after constant and anxious vigilance, I find it difficult to ascertain immediately the losses on these operations, whether they do or do not surpass the legal allowance for wastage.

In view of the responsibility of the operative officers of the Mint, and of the constant and fearful risks of their position, that clause of Sec. 4. of the Mint Act of Feb. 12, 1873 was enacted requiring the recommendation and nomination by the responsible officer of persons employed under him, before their Appointment by the Superintendent and Approval by the Director of the Mint. I have understood it to have been decided by the highest legal opinion, on general principles, that the accountability of an officer ceases or diminishes unless this freedom of choice be allowed. The law is thus explicit in the case of appointment.

My question relates to the removal of workmen. Can a direct inference from the conditions of appointment be applied to removal? Since, on account of responsibility, an officer has a certain control of the appointment of workmen, should he or should he not have some limiting power of dismissal, so as to secure his full degree of accountability? On my own behalf it would be better to let the question rest as it is, because patronage, the power of appointment and dismissal, is most damaging to popularity, making

manifold more enemies than friends, and also because, if my views are correct, my accountability will be more guardedly hedged in than it has been. I think, however, that on behalf of the interest of the Government, the question which I have raised should have a full and rigid examination by the proper authority. I therefore ask you to refer it to the Director of the Mint for his consideration.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
very respectfully yours
J. C. Booth

July? 1880

Query for Supt'dt of Mint
removing workmen

not submitted.